

THE UNDERGROUND LAMP POST

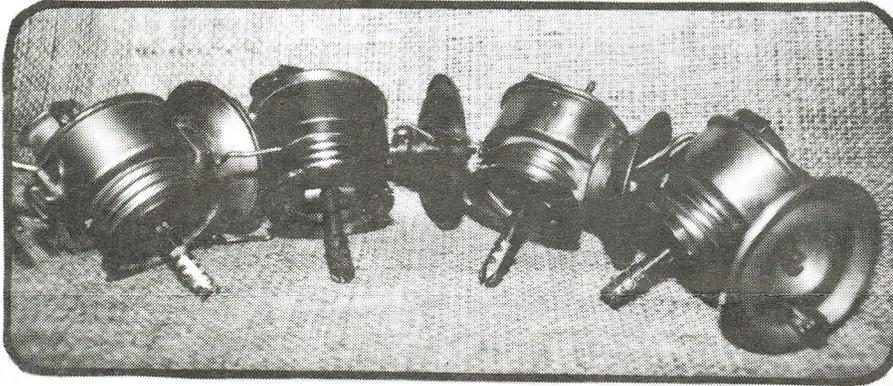


- MINERS WERE THE FIRST ECOLOGISTS -

Vol. VII, No.1

Fall, 1998

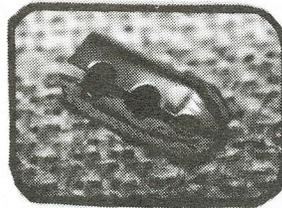
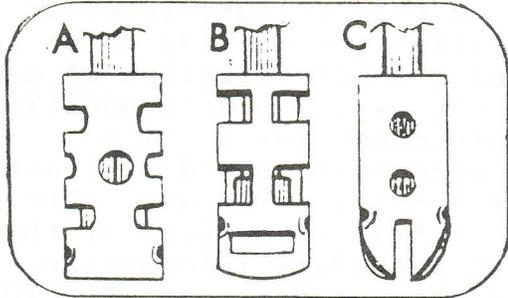
The Underground Lamp Post, devoted to old mine lamps, carbides, and candleholders. Mini-editor: Henry Pohs, 4537 Quitman St., Denver, Colorado, 80212



Guy's Dropper- "Oh, another Guy's Dropper. Forget it." Such is the common reaction at a sale or in a shop. But wait, open that lamp and look inside; you might find a rare item at the bottom of the water valve tube.

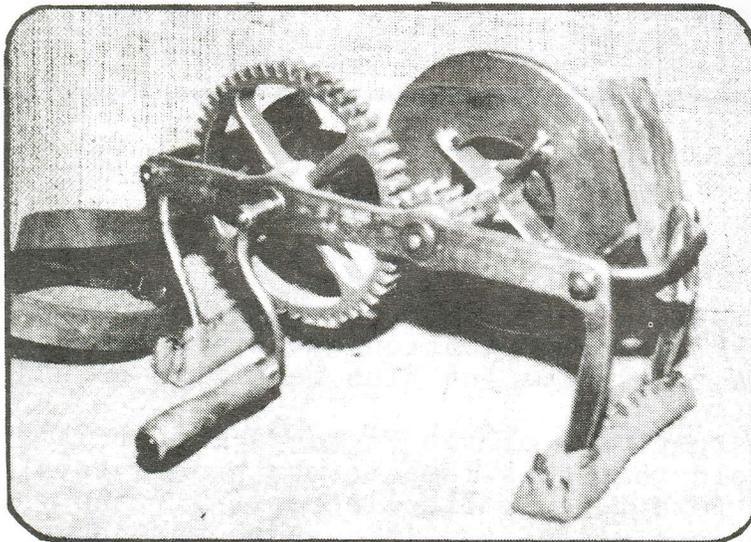
Illustrated in the drawing at the left are three different design applications of George Shanklin's (Guy's Dropper investor and designer) 1920

U. S. mechanical patent #1,357,596 for a valve sleeve to keep the spent calcium carbide away from the water valve. (Ref. Miner's Flame Light Book, pp. 470-479).



The lower "square" photograph shows an example of one of the sleeve, "C". The upper "oblong" photo from a private collection shows four Guy's

Dropper lamp tops with the three sleeve designs, left to right, A, C, C, B. So, check your Guy's Dropper lamps . . . you might have one of these rare sleeves. Of course, it will look better cleaned up and polished.



Spedding - Bob Kraft, 971 Baileyana Road, Hillsborough, Cal., 94101, phone 415-343-1976, is continuing his quest for comments on his project to reproduce a quantity of Spedding spark (lighting) machines (modern model at the left). Bob is focusing on exact size, shape, materials, etc., to provide a truer reproduction than the approximate one is this photo. Castings will be used where castings were used in the original, brass for brass, steel only where proper and true gear shaping as required. Bob has scheduled a special trip to England to examine the few surviving Spedding machines in British museums. Bob

has already had a number of collectors and museums respond affirmatively to this project. Write or call your comments to Bob about this very serious once-in-a-lifetime project.



Secondary - In the many worlds of the numerous types of collectables, names and markings on products are informational (and very desirable) by those who seek these collectables.

And so it is with miner's carbide lamps. The first level of identification is the manufacturer's name or logo as it appears on the lamp . . . from the common AUTO-LITE, GUY'S DROPPER or JUST-RITE through the exotic "rare" names such as DRY LITE or BELCRO NO.1

and clear down the alphabet to a ZAR cap lamp.

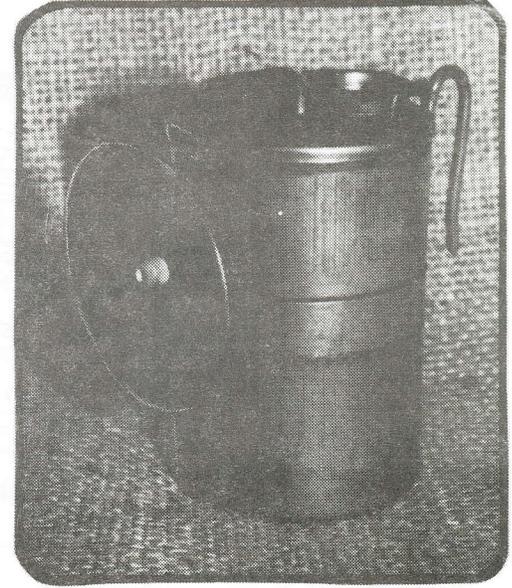
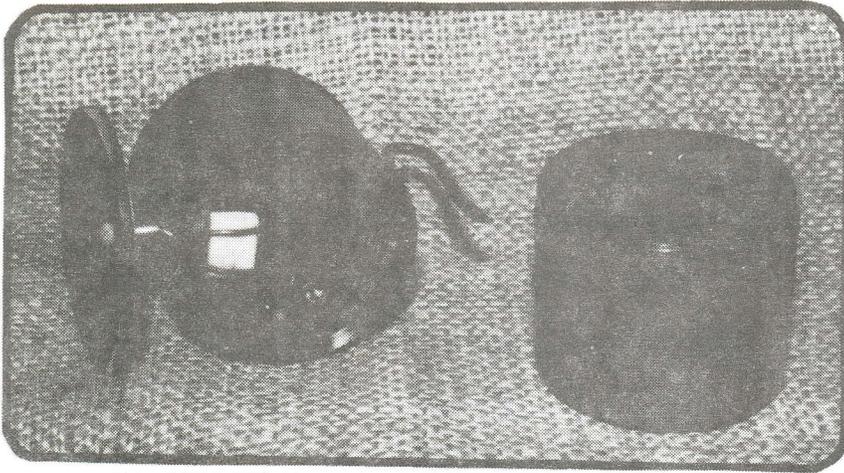
Beyond this primary level of identification for carbide lamps is a secondary commercialization of manufactured lamps . . . with additional or replacement information . . . some for presentation and at least one for a specific mine use. The upper photo here shows four of these lamps with secondary information. Left to right: A basic brass AUTO-LITE cap lamp was converted into a novelty cigarette lighter. The red band at the top of the carbide chamber reads THE LORAIN COAL & DOCK SALES CO., CLEVELAND, OHIO. A woven wick replaced the burner tip; the bottom is filled with lead; the



top is filled with cotton; a swivel flame snuffer has been added to the reflector; no hook or brace. Next, the 1917 convention of the American Institute of Mining Engineers (AIME) featured a BRITE-LITE superintendent's carbide lamp with a special raised medallion-type legend and symbol on the side. The legend reads: ST. LOUIS, 1917 and A I M E with the miner's crossed hammer and gad symbol. The brass lamps were painted black. Next, The Justrite Mfg. Co. produced a number of special cast aluminum hand lamps with the name COPPER QUEEN replacing the standard "Little Giant" name on the side of the lamp. Finally, the Justrite Mfg. Co. produced a number of nickel-plated carbide cap lamps in 1918 for distribution as safety awards for the Pickands-Mather Mining Co. A red, white and blue medallion on the side reads: P M CO., 1918, SAFETY FIRST.

The second photo here shows a larger view of the Pickands-Mather lamp. This is important for we have been told that this lamp is worth more to a Pickands-Mather collector than it is to a mine lamp collector . . . and this rare lamp has commanded some prime prices recently. This photo was taken of the fireplace hearth of Victor Verity's home in Medford, Oregon, in 1992.

Such is the heritage of these four carbide lamps with more than just a manufacturer's history. Their secondary commercialization provides us with another window into our collection hobby. Are there other lamps like this?



UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

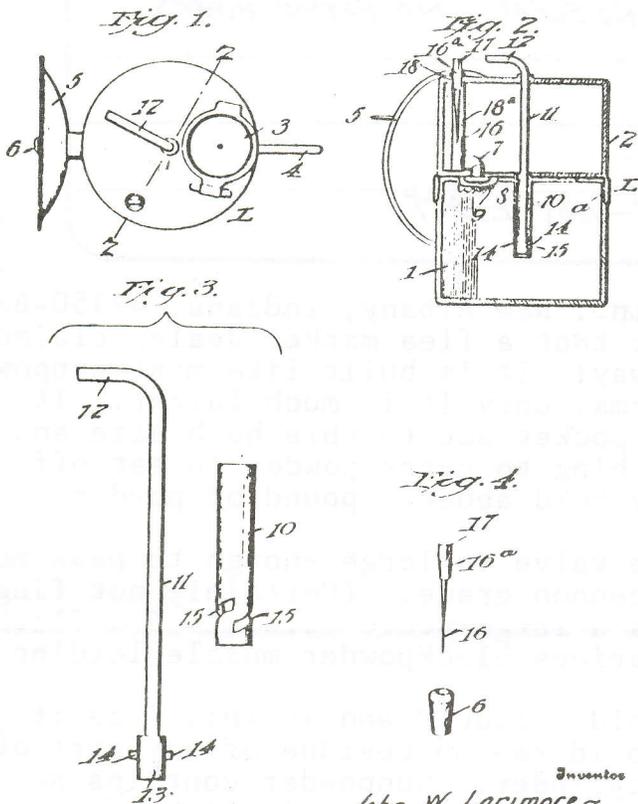
JOHN W. LARRIMORE, OF SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS.

ACETYLENE LAMP.

1,053,186.

Specification of Letters Patents. Patented Feb. 18, 1913, 1913.

Application filed December 1, 1911. Serial No. 663,283.



Witnesses
T. H. Moredau
Amory L. Goff

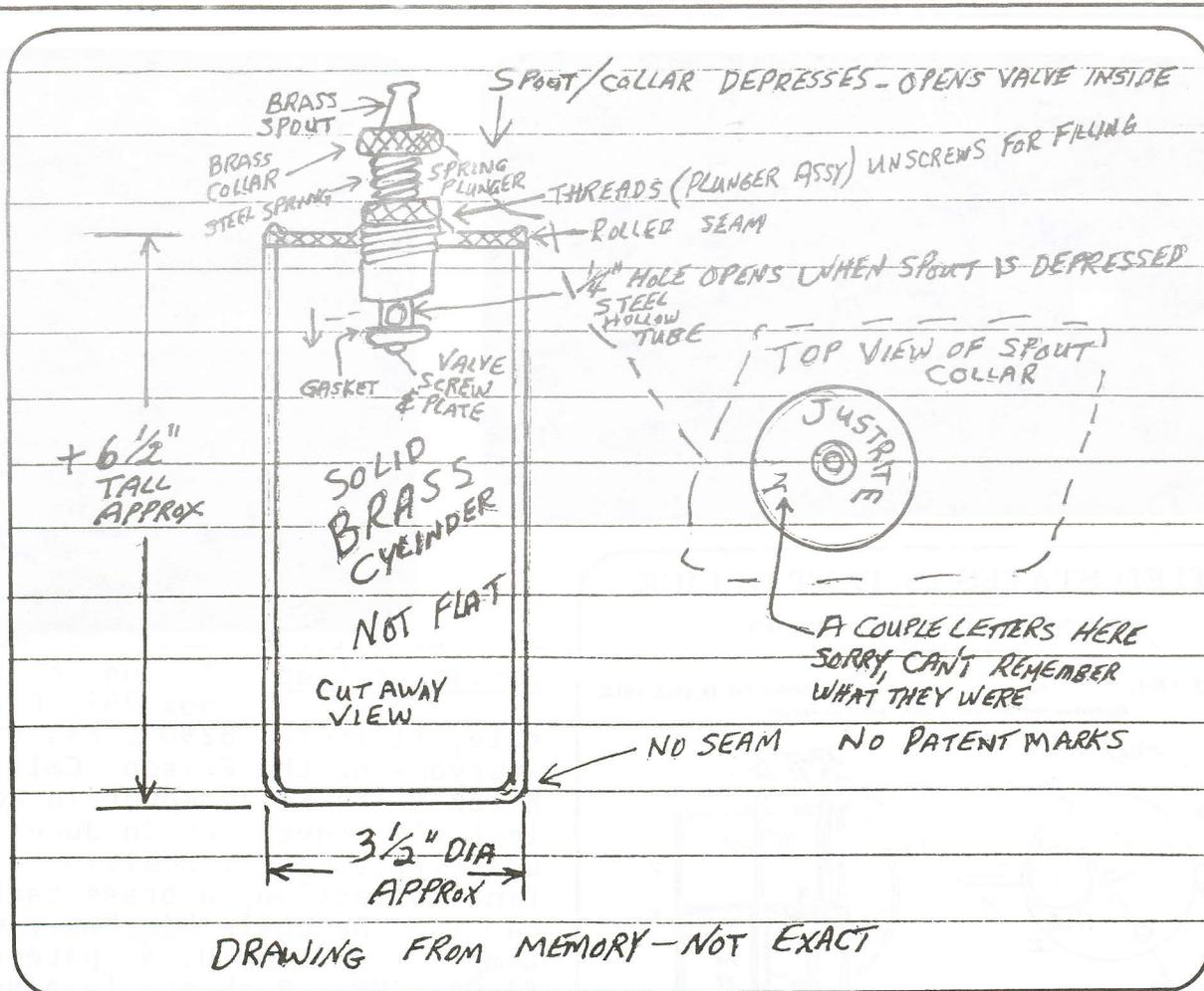
Inventor
 John W. Larimore
 By *S. T. McKeen*
 Attorney

Larrimore lamp - Al Quaman, P. O. Box 292, Carbondale, Illinois, 62903, has shown everyone at the Frisco, Colorado, Black Hills-Rocky Mountain Collector's Convention in June, the beautiful, latest addition to his fine collection, a brass carbide cap lamp he calls his "Larrimore Lamp" . . . from U. S. patent #1,053,186. Both the lamp and the patent are shown here. Eastern collectors had previously seen this one-of-a-kind treasure which appears to be unfired, so Westerners were pleased to be able to examine and to photograph this newly-rediscovered treasure. Congratulations , Al.

Kudos also to Leo Stambaugh, Steve Rush, Bob Guthrie and others for a wonderful Convention in Frisco. As always, those attending have many lights, memories and friendships to talk about.

Errol - Errol Christman hosted an active September lamp-in in Grass Valley, California. Again, many good items and friends made for fine memories.

Sale or trade - Old friend Mark Ballard, 1204 Anderson Drive, Marion, Illinois, 62959, 618-993-8482, has what he calls an "odd ball' caribde cap lamp for sale or trade. Mark describes the lamp as similar to the W. D. ROOF lamp (see p. 523, The Miner's Flame Light Book) except with a different design reflector. Errol Christman has verified the the two lamps are similar. It has been suggested that this type of lamp was made by an indipendent, traveling tinsmith and were marked with the buyer's name. Mark's lamp is marked JACK SMITH. Each, then, seems to be a one-of-a-kind and, hence, very, very rare. Call Mark for more.



Justrite - Ken Hoover, 1655 Garretson Ln., New Albany, Indiana, 47150-6213, has sketched, above, a flask that a flea market dealer claimed to be a carbide flask. Ken says, "No way! It is built like most gunpowder flasks as used with black powder firearms, only it is much larger. It would not be comfortable to carry in a pocket due to this high size and shape. Would miners have used such a thing to carry powder to set off charges? This container would probably hold about a pound of powder.

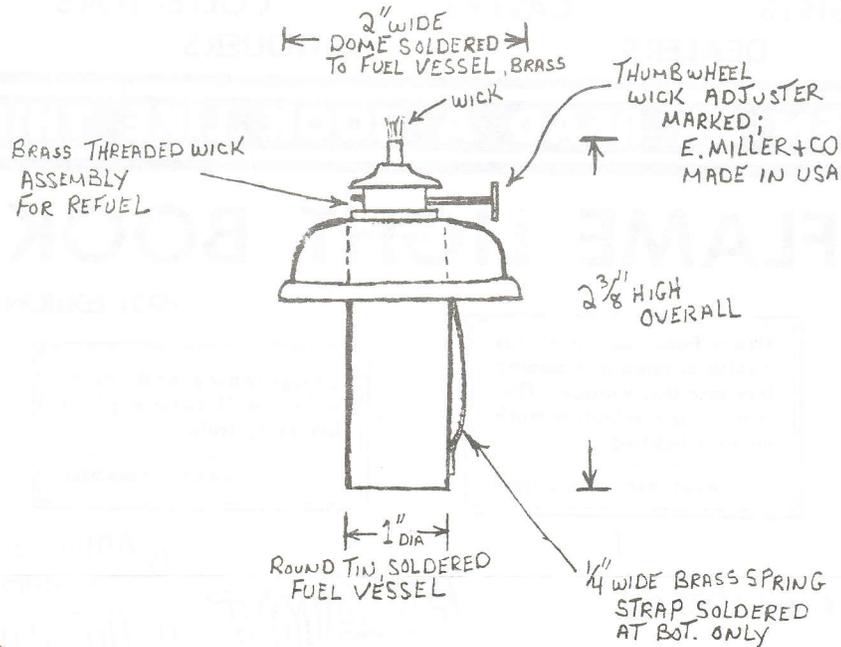
"A Justrite powder flask?"

"The approximately 1/4" hole in the valve is large enough to pass most gunpowder grain sizes except possibly cannon grade. (Certainly not finger-nail size carbide. Ed.) This design is a large-scale version of a flask I have used over the years for loading various blackpowder muzzle-loading firearms.

"Too, it could have been used to hold a liquid and in this case it probable was. I say this because I could see no residue of any sort of the bottom of the valve or inside the cylinder. Gunpowder contains salts and is corrosive to brass. Usually a powder residue will stick in a short period of time. Maybe a reader out there knows."

Lamp sale-Frederick J. Watts, 14 Woodside Terrace, Llanhilleth, Gwent, U. K., NP3 2RE, phone 01495 214225, has a good number of English flame safety lamps for sale. He assures us that these are all first class lamps and all are in excellent condition. Call or write for a list and costs. There are some impressive lamps here.

Engine and hoist - Long-time reader Gerry Scanlan, 193 West Maple, Venedy, Illinois, 62214, has an Ideal Engine and Aetna Steam Hoist available, probably for a museum. Write Gerry for photos and more information. This sounds good for the right organization.



Illumination - Perry Pillar, 141 Second St., Joliette, Pennsylvania, 17981, has found a lamp he has illustrated at the left. He states that, "It was re-discovered in Bunker Hill, West Virginia, as a 'Tunnel Lamp.' It's supposed usage was to slip into fixed brackets along a shaft or tunnel walls for illumination. Daily refuel was carried to the site in numerous quantity in containers similar to egg cartons."

Models - Anthony Fisher, 12 Station Road, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed, Mid Glamorgan, CF82 7AT, phone 01443 814107, writes that he has come across a firm which produces mining figures and models. They are made from a coal resin and are very reasonably priced . . . write COALCAST LIMITED, Chapel House, Trehafod Road, Pontypridd, Mid Llamorgan, CF37 2LY, phone 01443 688282. Anthony also writes that there a lot of reproduction miner's lamps being manufactured in the U. K. They are made by firms such as E. Thomas & Williams of Aberdare and Protector of Eccles. (See page 316 of The Miner's Flame Light Book); i.e. Protector GRGS Model and E. Thomas & Williams No. 8 Clanny and Davy lamps. These have very short gauzes, look very good, but they are only for decoration. They come complete with dents, dirt, dust and even numbers stamped on them.

Ore cars - Long-time friend and reader Dick Hauck at the Sterling Hill Mining Museum, 30 Plant Street, Odgensburg, New Jersey, 07439, 201-209-2712, has a number of ore cars in very good condition available. Anyone needing an ore car should give Dick a call.

Another sales list - Your Mini-editor has a second sales list now available. There are some very nice lamps and candlesticks on this list. We have some items still available from our first list. One dollar postage will bring you both lists. Henry Pohs, 4537 Quitman St., Denver, Color. 80212-2535.

Thank You - First, sincere and heartfelt thanks to all readers who have sent their prayers and thoughts during this Spring and Summer of our serious illness. Each message was so kind and thoughtful and each still means so much to us. Second, it is again our duty to say "Thank You" for all the assistance which keeps the Lamp Post in circulation . . . over 30 years now. Printing comes from Tennessee; envelopes from Minnesota, Colorado and Ohio; postage from Australia, Canada, Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, California, Germany, Missouri, Ohio, Nevada, Virginia, Indiana, Washington, Utah and Illinois. Thank you all again.

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